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**Sialia sialis sialis.** Bluebird. Common resident, but the numbers were greatly increased by winter visitants. Its principal food during the cold weather was sumac berries. Nidification began about March 25. Young and adults were both molting heavily as late as September 18.

*San Antonio, Texas, October 22, 1914.*

## FROM FIELD AND STUDY

**Barn Owls as the Farmer's Friends.**—On May 13, 1914, while staying for a short time at the Herminghaus Ranch near Mendota, Fresno County, California, I was informed that there were two nests of Monkey-faced Owls in the tank house, which is a large three-story affair built on a slight knoll a short distance from the house. Although the tank is still in place the building has been in disuse for several years.

Upon investigation I found that two pairs of Barn Owls (*Aluco pratincola*) had shared the structure with a colony of Cliff Swallows and a great number of bats. One nest was placed in the tank on the bones, fur, pellets, and refuse that had accumulated to a depth of several inches. One bird was perched on a beam overhead asleep, while his mate occupied the nest which contained four very small birds and six eggs. Scattered about on the floor were five Pocket Gophers (*Thomomys*), five Kangaroo Rats (*Perodipus*), one Pocket Mouse (*Perognathus*), and two white-footed mice (*Peromyscus*), all of which were in good condition and undoubtedly of the previous night's capture. Besides these, there were partly eaten remains and fresh skeletons of several more. All evidence pointed to the fact that this place had been used for a great many years by owls, as I picked up nearly four hundred entire pellets and could have secured many more.

The other nest was on the floor of the platform between the siding and tank in a rather exposed situation, and the nine eggs had been deserted for some time.

A second visit was made to the Herminghaus Ranch on July 19, and upon inquiry about the owls, I was informed that all of the ten eggs in the first mentioned nest had hatched and only one of the owlets failed to come to maturity. My informant also stated that early in June a second set, consisting of seven eggs, had been deposited and produced seven sturdy birds, the youngest of which was still present, being unwilling to attempt a long flight.

Aside from the late nesting dates, there was another fact that may have had some significance. Mr. Albert Foster, the superintendent of the ranch, realizes the great benefit that he derives from the presence of such efficient mammal destroyers about the place, and affords them protection at all times; but he informs me that a former tenant persistently shot all hawks and owls and destroyed their nests at every opportunity, and that on the Herminghaus Ranch, the Barn Owls were reduced almost to the point of extermination. Is it not possible that these nocturnal hunters, now safe from persecution, are depositing large sets of eggs in an effort to regain their normal abundance in that region?

If the thoughtless farmers who so relentlessly destroy this owl on account of its supposed fondness for chickens and pigeons would take the trouble to keep watch of a nest-site through one season, the most ignorant among them could hardly fail to realize that they are working against their own best interests whenever they kill a Barn Owl. Then, if we could convince sportsmen that all hawks and owls are not the ravenous destroyers of game birds that hunters generally suppose them to be, we would not be saddened by the all too frequent sight of the remains of numerous innocent Sparrow Hawks and Red-tails that are to be found on the ground beneath the telephone and power wires along so many of our country roads during the shooting season, and the plague-infested squirrels, of which we have heard so much in recent years, would cease to be a supposed menace to our health, or destroyers of the farmers' crops.—JOHN G. TYLER, *Fresno, California.*

**Two Birds New to California.**—*Hydranassa tricolor ruficollis*. While collecting January 17, 1914, at La Punta, located on the south end of San Diego Bay, I shot a Louisiana Heron. It proved to be an adult female.

*Vireosylva olivacea*. While skinning birds at home on the screen porch, October 6, 1914, I heard a strange bird call in a fruit tree outside. Picking up my gun I soon had the specimen in hand. It was an adult male Red-eyed Vireo.

The identification of these specimens was made by Mr. J. Grinnell.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *San Diego, California*.

**Return of Winter Birds to the Same Locality.**—For two winters I have been feeding birds about our canyon home. During the winter of 1912-13 I scattered the food on the hill-slope in front of our dining-room window, and was rewarded by the daily appearance of Song Sparrows, Fox Sparrows, the two Towhees, Golden-crowned Sparrows, Thrashers and Wren-tits.

The next winter, 1913-14, for photographic purposes I began putting the food on the railing of the narrow unroofed porch, which extends under the window. It took some time to induce all the different varieties to come to this new table, which was set for them immediately in front of a large plate-glass window and at a distance of only three feet. But one by one they overcame their shyness, and came even when several observers stood just inside the window.

On the morning of September 27, 1914, a Golden-crowned Sparrow made his first fall appearance on the feeding-ground, and a few minutes later he flew up on to the railing in search of food. At seven o'clock on the morning of October 4, 1914, I saw a Fox Sparrow on the feeding-ground. At nine o'clock he, too, was feeding on the railing. He may very likely have been there earlier, but I had not caught him at it.

It would seem to me quite unreasonable to suppose that these birds were not the same birds that had been trained to pose for photographs on my railing during the previous winter.—MRS. AMELIA S. ALLEN, *Berkeley, California*.

**Note on the Feeding Habits of the Blue-fronted Jay.**—In July, 1914, I spent a few days with friends in the Yosemite Valley. On July 12 we made a trip to Sierra Point, then came down to "The Happy Isles", in the Merced River below Vernal Falls, where we spent some time. While eating luncheon a Blue-fronted Jay (*Cyanocitta stelleri frontalis*) came near us, evidently in quest of food. A good-sized piece of cracker thrown to it was seized at once. With the cracker in its beak the bird ascended from limb to limb nearly to the top of a tall tree near by, then, flying across the river, disappeared in the heavy forest on the other side. In a few moments it returned. Another small bit of cracker was thrown to it which it ate at once.

When still another small piece of cracker was thrown on the ground not fifteen feet from where we sat eating our luncheon, the bird picked it up and, flying to a large cedar tree near by, alighted upon the trunk about five feet from the ground. Then we saw the bird put the cracker in a crack in the bark, driving it in securely by tapping it vigorously with its bill. And then came the most interesting and unexpected act of the performance: the bird pulled off three or four small pieces of bark and placed them in the crack in such a way as to quite effectively cover up the cracker and protect it from easy discovery!

The bird then came back for a larger piece of cracker which it carried across the river as it did the first piece, first ascending by a series of short flights well toward the top of the same tall tree and then disappearing among the trees on the other side. Several of our party then went to the tree where the bird had hidden the cracker and all saw the cracker and the pieces of bark with which the bird had covered it up so neatly.—BARTON WARREN EVERMANN, *California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco*.

**Another Record of the Occurrence of the Emperor Goose in California.**—While in San Jose recently I noticed a mounted Emperor Goose (*Philacte canagica*) in a store window. On inquiry at the store and through the correspondence which ensued, I was able to get the following information. The specimen was obtained on the Glyde Ranch near Davis, Yolo County, California, by G. H. Anderson of San Jose. The mounted specimen bears the date of December, 1906. Mr. Anderson says that the bird had been seen on a pond for about three weeks before its capture, and that other hunters had not been able to get close enough for a shot. By driving within ninety yards, a lucky shot brought it down.

The Emperor Goose is the least migratory of all the geese, seldom going more than a hundred miles south of its breeding range along the coast of western Alaska. The occurrence of this goose in California is always of sufficient interest to merit a record.—H. C. BRYANT, *Berkeley, California*.

**Notes from San Bernardino, California.**—On the 4th of October, 1914, and again on the 6th, I saw a band of about fifteen Pinyon Jays (*Cyanocephalus cyanocephalus*) here in San Bernardino. Dr. Horace Gaylord informs me that these birds have been occasionally seen at Pasadena; but in over twenty-five years of observation I never have known of their occurring in the San Bernardino Valley, nor has Mr. R. B. Herron seen any. This year's visit of the Pinyon Jay was therefore a great surprise to me.

Another new record here, although of course it is due to the aid of man, was the finding by me on April 22, 1914, of a nest and twelve eggs of the Ring-necked Pheasant (*Phasianus torquatus*). The identification was positive. The birds were manifestly some that had been liberated in the vicinity, but they had become very wild and I am of the opinion that in time this game bird will become permanently established here.—EDWARD WALL, *San Bernardino, California*.

**Occurrence of White-crowned Sparrow near Claremont, California.**—On April 24, 1914, an adult male White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys leucophrys*) was shot near Claremont, by Halsted White of this place. The specimen was brought to me and is now in my collection. I have spent considerable time collecting this winter and spring, both about Claremont and up to 6000 feet altitude in the mountains to the north of here, and this is the first one of these birds that I have seen. This bird was shot in the brush along the base of the foothills.—WRIGHT M. PIERCE, *Claremont, California*.

**Bird Notes from British Columbia and Southern California.**—In the year 1884 I read in the *Daily Colonist* an account of a California Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus californicus*) having been seen flying about Esquimalt Harbour, B. C., and the paper remarked that as soon as noticed some parties put off in a boat to try and shoot it, as was usual with a rare or uncommon bird. I never noticed any Pelicans there myself, although I was on water around the southern end of Vancouver Island for some years.

A young male Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*) was shot near Westminster, Orange County, California, about January 20, 1914. The bird was in young plumage, with just two or three feathers on the side coming out as representing the adult male plumage.

A Spotted Owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) was shot by a hunter October 28, 1913, up San Gabriel Canyon, Los Angeles County, California. It was skinned in the mountains and no record of the sex taken. I believe the species uncommon enough to be worth noting. I have never come across any myself, but owing to their retiring habits, there may be quite a few of these in the right locality.

On May 29, 1914, I saw a fine male Scott Oriole (*Icterus parisorum*). It alighted on the electric wires on the street in San Diego close where I was and sang loudly for some time. It then flew off to some gum trees and I saw it no more, nor have I noticed it since.—H. GREY, *San Diego, California*.

**Random Notes from San Diego.**—*Butorides virescens anthonyi*. One nest found near National City, May 30, 1907, contained five fresh eggs; it was situated in the top of a slender willow sapling ten feet above the ground. Two nests were found at Lakeside in 1913. On May 25, a nest was discovered placed in the top of a slender willow tree. It was partly concealed by a species of climbing vine although the five fresh eggs were plainly seen through the nest from beneath. The male was incubating.

On June 8 another nest was located, situated in the top of a willow tree about 50 feet high and was only reached by ascending a nearby tree and using an egg grabber. The bird returned several times during the course of proceedings.

This nest contained four fresh eggs, and on the ground directly underneath was another egg—perfectly fresh and unbroken. It had probably been laid before the nest was completed and had fallen through; but I am unable to explain why it did not break in the great fall.

A nest found May 30 of this year (1914) at Lakeside, contained four young about eight days old. These were revisited a week later and had grown considerably, having a partial coat of streaked feathers, and appeared to be on guard with a high shrill yell

and thrusting of beaks, but yet unable to stand. At either visit no parent birds were seen.

*Spizella atrogularis*. A nest was located at San Diego inside the city limits by a friend. May 9, 1912, it contained one egg. The full clutch of three was taken May 12. The eggs were bluish and unspotted.

The nest was in an extremely open spot, it being easily seen for fifty yards in any direction, and was entirely built of grasses and placed about 18 inches above the ground in an upright fork of a slender chaparral. The bird was rather tame, allowing me to get within a few feet of her. But when she left the nest, it was a rapid downward flight into the nearest brush, and she would then return like a Bell Sparrow, hopping on the ground most of the way.

*Ammodramus savannarum bimaculatus*. A set of this species was taken for me May 17, 1907, near San Diego. Several sets were taken about that time by the same boy. May 19, 1912, while collecting on the outskirts of San Diego, a Grasshopper Sparrow was flushed from a nest containing three pipped eggs and two newly hatched young. The nest was open, resembling a Horned Lark's, and was situated at the base of a small bush. The bird acted rather shy, but on my staying around the nest she would approach very close.—LAURENCE M. HUEY, *San Diego, California*.

**Yakutat Song Sparrow in Oregon.**—A part of April of the present year was spent by the writer in the interests of the newly formed Department Museum of Zoology of the University of Oregon, in field work at Netarts Bay, on the north Oregon coast, a few miles south of Tillamook Bay. On April 14, while searching for shore-birds among the boulders at the breakers' edge at "Short Beach", three miles north of Netarts, I was surprised to see a Song Sparrow fly up from among the rocks, out of the way of a breaker, and alight on another boulder at the edge of the breaking surf. A shot secured the bird, which Mr. Grinnell has identified as *Melospiza melodia caurina*, with a note that it is the southernmost record for the species, save for the one taken a few years ago at Humboldt Bay.

The following day, April 15, Mr. Stanley G. Jewett of the Oregon Fish and Game Commission, with whom the writer was working at the time, secured another specimen of this subspecies among the identical boulders in the edge of the surf at Short Beach.

The first specimen, secured by the writer, is now Accession 390, Univ. of Ore., Museum of Zoology, Eugene, Oregon. The second specimen, taken by Mr. Jewett, is Field No. 1810, S. G. J., Coll. of Fish and Game Comm., Portland, Oregon.—ALFRED SHELTON, *University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon*.

**New Years Day Bird Census at Palisades, Mesa County, Colorado.**—January 1, 1915; 2 P. M. to 4 P. M.; distance, about 5 miles along river bank and irrigation canal; day clear and bright; light southwest wind; temperature 35. Species: Killdeer 1; California Quail 15 (others heard); Pigeon Hawk 1; Rocky Mountain Hairy Woodpecker 1; Red-shafted Flicker 5; Desert Horned Lark 150; Magpie 7; Western Raven 2; Pinon Jay 12; Brewer Blackbird 7; White-rumped Shrike 2; House Finch 15; English Sparrow 30; Gambel and White-crowned Sparrows 72; Mountain Song Sparrow 29; Goldfinch 1 (heard); Mountain Chickadee 1; Pink-sided Junco 55; Shufeldt Junco 2 (male); Intermediate Junco 10; Western Robin 1. Total, 22 species and approximately 419 individuals.

Remarks: The surprise of the afternoon was the solitary Killdeer seen, as there was ice everywhere except for the narrow channel of the river and this was full of floating ice. Three species which should have been seen but were not, are: Western Redtail, Grey-headed Junco and some variety of Leucosticte; the last mentioned of these probably have not come down to lower levels yet this season, on account of there being so little snow on the surrounding mountains.—J. L. SLOANAKER, *Palisades, Colorado*.

**First Specimens of Baird Sandpiper from the State of Washington.**—Two specimens of the Baird Sandpiper (*Pisobia bairdi*) are now in the Collection of Whitman College at Walla Walla, Washington. One of these has been compared with the series in the California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, and proves to be still in the winter plumage. The specimens were taken by Storrs H. Lyman in the spring of 1908 on a farm about four miles from Dayton, Columbia County, Washington. Mr. Lyman has kindly furnished all available information about them. The sandpipers were taken in the early part of April, probably on either the 10th or 11th. A cold rain fell that day turning into a snow squall in the middle of the afternoon. The two birds were taken from a small flock feeding in a grain field.

Baird Sandpipers are reported to have been seen at three localities in the state (Dawson and Bowles, *Birds of Washington*, 1910, p. 656), but no specimens have been obtained previously.—LEE R. DICE, *Berkeley, California*.